

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT INITIATIVE

DEQ Community Involvement

LISTENING. LEARNING. COLLABORATING.

Protecting Virginia's environment together.

What is DEQ Community Involvement?

- *Pro-actively involving* the public in problem solving and decision making
- Considering and *using* public input in addition to scientific information and legal guidance to make decisions

Good Community Involvement

- Improves understanding and trust
- Offers opportunities for stakeholders to discuss differences & develop solutions
- Improves decisions
- Increases stakeholder “buy-in” and compliance
- Resulting actions are more likely to be sustained over time

DEQ Strategic Goal- Informed and Engaged Community

- Community Involvement Task Force
 - Major environmental organizations and DEQ staff met for 4 months
 - Recommended actions for DEQ and partners
 - Developed Community Involvement Policy
- Conducted 7 Regional Open House Meetings in October and November

Next Steps

How will DEQ continue to pro-actively involve the community?

1. Provide More Opportunities for Meaningful Involvement

- Such as recent Community Open House Meetings



2. Engage the Public Early in the Process

- Discussions with interested stakeholders



3. Seek and Consider Different Points of View

- Affected Citizens



- Environmental Organizations and Local Officials



4. Ensure that decision making activities...

- Are open to all
- Accessible to all



5. Develop innovative ways to present information

- Useful
- Understandable
- Timely
- Easy to find



6. Develop tools & methods to help staff work with the community

- Leadership commitment & resources
- Best practices & guidance
- Training & materials
- Support of newly hired Specialist



Community Involvement

Bio-solids

- Sewage sludge
- No local control for sludge or bio-solids
- Baseline studies by DEQ needed prior to application of sludge to determine impacts
- Health aspects of sludge application

Community Involvement

Community

- How to participate in technical advisory committees
- Government working with citizens
- Collaboration with local and regional groups like Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Responsibility to get environmental messages across and engage citizens
- Clearinghouse for data, water quality
- Availability of information electronically to public
- Opportunities for public participation

Community Involvement

Community (continued)

- Guidance to small communities for treatment plants “basis of design” reports, etc., to meet nutrient limits
- More support for citizen water quality monitoring
- Relationship of DEQ with community groups
- How to designate additional streams as “exceptional waters” (Teir III Waters)

Community Involvement

Funding

- Need funding for local response to federal and state regulations
- Keeping industry viable within regulations
- More funding for environmental protection
- Funding for agricultural “best management practices”

Community Involvement

Planning

- Smart growth measures
- Sustainability and growth management
- Strategic alliances between small towns in terms of partnerships
- Comprehensive plan for water management cutting across all agencies
- Sustainable forestry to help water quality
- Regional approach to Storm water management

Community Involvement

Planning (continued)

- Urban issues
- Water quality, quantity – drought and floods
- Maintaining river flow for recreation uses
- Protection of riparian zones
- Dialogue with AEP about lake management on Smith Mountain Lake

Community Involvement

Statute and Regulation Issues

- Property rights of landowners
- Riparian landowner rights and information
- Better enforcement
- Regulations that affect farming/agriculture

Community Involvement

Water Quality

- Erosion control
- Wetlands, development and drainage issues
- Destruction and degradation of habitat
- Water quality and quantity
- TMDL's ; Who is Responsible
- Contribution of wildlife to bacteria levels in impaired streams where TMDLs have been developed
- Fecal coliform impairments of streams
- Storm water runoff – quantity and quality. Reductions in quantity.

Community Involvement

Water Quality (continued)

- Ground water pollution
- Illegal dumping on Sunday nights into river

Control of PCBs

- Toxics in drinking water (e.g., benzene) and testing for pollutants
- Raw sewage discharged to Smith Mountain Lake
- Erosion control at Smith Mountain Lake
- Trash in Roanoke River
- Nutrient reduction
- Setting up system of monitoring on upper tributaries of Roanoke River

Community Involvement

Water Quality (continued)

- Stream habitat and biological health
- Urban non-point source pollution
- Water quality for fishing uses
- Nutrient level discharges for point sources
- Protection of native species
- Exotic invasive species
- Application of excess lawn fertilizer and accompanying runoff during storms

Community Involvement

Water Supply

- Inter-basin water transfer
- Private reservoir and public water concerns
- Water re-use opportunities and acceptance
- Water quality and quantity to meet drinking water needs

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